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ABSTRACT

This Carnegie-Mellon University Libraries study compared the effectiveness of two methods of current awareness service: computerized updates and the distribution of the tables of contents of journals. In particular it compared the timeliness and availability of articles in-house with the greater coverage but longer time lag (and possible lower accessibility) of articles cited in computer updates. Forty-eight randomly selected faculty members from the chemistry and public affairs departments were segmented into three groups and given retrospective searches on the topics of their choice. Thereafter, one group received only computer updates, another tables of contents, and the third a combination of both. Participants then evaluated their service via questionnaires. It was found that the tables of contents generally provided a more valuable service than the computer updates. The report cites nine references and includes tables and sample questionnaires. (FM)

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A COMPARISON OF TWO CURRENT AWARENESS METHODS

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A COMPARISON OF TWO CURRENT AWARENESS METHODS

Kathryn Chaloner, Department of Statistics
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INTRODUCTION

Carnegie-Mellon University Libraries have supplied computerized bibliographic services since September 1975. However a current awareness service has never been offered by the libraries. The University Libraries received a grant from a private foundation in response to a proposal which included as one of its goals investigation of provision of access to information. Using a small amount of these funds, we had the opportunity to conduct a study on methods of supplying current information on topics of interest to our users. The study team consisted of the authors of this paper and seven public service librarians from all three university libraries.

The question may be raised as to the reason for making yet another study of current awareness, particularly as academic libraries have traditionally devoted less time to selective dissemination of information or SDI and current awareness than other types of libraries (see Rowley (1979) and Line (1969). We wanted to determine the value of computerized updates, a relatively new method of current awareness, and to examine a variation of an older manual method, the distribution of the tables of contents of journals. We saw the latter, a method which focussed on periodicals received by the libraries, as a way to enhance the value of those journals to the campus community, during a time when periodical subscriptions are being severely reduced. In selecting the methods of current awareness for comparison in our study, we wanted one method that we might feasibly continue to supply at a nominal cost after the study was over. The contents pages in contrast to the computer updates met this criterion.

CURRENT AWARENESS SERVICES PROVIDED DURING THE STUDY

All participants received an initial computerized retrospective search on the topic of their choice. For the next six months some received computerized updates, some received the manual service and some received both services. The retrospective search brought participants up-to-date on the topic they had selected. The retrospective search also aided the librarians in developing the search profile for the updates, for those in groups which were to receive the computer updates. For these people monthly, bi-monthly or bi-weekly updates were provided over a 6-month period, using the databases available from Lockheed and SDC. Frequency was determined by availability, and/or number of databases being used for a particular profile. The limiting factor was that the cost for six months of updating was not to exceed $60.- or an average of $10.- per month per participant.

Each participant who was to receive the manual service was asked to identify six journals he did not subscribe to personally or otherwise scan regularly, and so received a very specific group of contents pages. Titles chosen were flagged in the periodical check-in file, copies of contents pages were made on receipt and were forwarded to the participants.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

In the design of the study we drew on previous work on current awareness reported in the literature (Warden, (1978), Vincent and Seals, (1975), Parker and Essary, (1975), Cosmann (1977) and Brandli, (1976)).

Provision of computer updates has been described previously (for example Warden). Manual current awareness methods described include scanning periodicals, reviewing periodical indexes and tables of contents of books etc. (See Vincent and Seals, and Parker and Essary).

In some cases these current awareness services require a significant amount of professional time (Cosmann). Many articles have described contents page services. The one described by Campbell (1978) is selective to a degree, and each set of contents pages was routed to a small number of users. This compares favorably to other methods, where large numbers of contents pages in broad

groupings are sent to entire academic departments. Typically a person whose name begins with a letter late in the alphabet will receive the contents pages weeks after they are sent out, and, because the groupings are so broad, will have to then wade through many to find the ones he really wants to scan. The present study differed from others in that the particular type of contents page distribution had not been evaluated previously.

Some of the questions we asked of participants were the same as those used in previous studies. We are indebted to previous studies for some of the questions we administered to the participants. (See Warden and also Brandli).

PURPOSES OF THE STUDY

The principal purpose of the study was to compare the two current awareness services. In particular we sought to compare the timeliness and availability of articles in-house with the greater coverage but longer time lag and possible lower accessibility of articles cited in computer updates. We wanted to determine whether one method was significantly more successful than the other in meeting user needs.

The second major purpose of the study was to discover the methods used by faculty to keep up-to-date in their fields.

A third purpose was to determine if there were any significant differences in the methods used to keep current by the two participant groups.

As a by-product of the study we hoped to make the campus community more aware of the capabilities of computerized bibliographic searching.

METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

Two groups of faculty members were identified - one group consisted of the Chemistry and Chemical Engineering departments (Chem/Chem E), and another of the School of Urban and Public Affairs and the Graduate School of Industrial Administration (SUPA/GSIA). These two groups were chosen as they were thought to identify two homogeneous groups, where for the first group the bibliographic bases are well established and terms used in searches well defined and for the second group the bases are less tailored to user requirements, terms and areas of research are diverse and citations widespread in many types of publications.

A total of 48 participants was decided upon. Cost limitations prevented our using a larger number. A random sample of 24, chosen from the total faculty in each of the two areas, was selected, stratified into senior and junior faculty members. As expected some people chosen were unwilling to participate and were replaced by others, also selected at random. As an incentive to participate in the study, subjects were given the services free of charge in exchange for supplying information for the study. The 48 participants were randomly assigned to three groups and each group received a retrospective computer search on the topic of their choice. Group A then received only computer up-dates, Group B received only tables of contents and Group C received both types of up-dates. Librarians from the three university libraries were, within subject areas, randomly assigned to work with the participants.

Data were collected at various stages of the six-month study and were tabulated on the computer using MINITAB. In order to identify response bias a short questionnaire was completed by all participants, and by those who declined to participate before the study began. We also wanted to determine reasons for non-participation. All were asked about their previous experience of computer-aided bibliographic searches and current awareness services. Although over one-third of the faculty members contacted were unwilling to participate, 90% of these gave as their reason their absence from campus for the duration of the study. Those who could not participate were questioned on their experience of computerized bibliographic searches, how they kept abreast of the literature in their field and how often they visited the library to browse among the periodicals. This group did not differ significantly in these characteristics from those who were willing to participate. Thus it is felt that there was no response bias in the sample.

After receiving a complete retrospective search of their area of interest, participants were asked for an evaluation of the search and how it could be improved. When he or she searched for an article cited in the search the participant was asked to complete a short questionnaire describing where the article was obtained, how long it took to retrieve it and how useful it was.

Throughout the next six months participants were expected to complete a form for each citation from the current awareness services which they looked up, again describing where they found it, how long it took and now useful it was.

By means of the questionnaire eliciting data on each citation looked up, we hoped to be able to make comparisons among groups A, B and C. A final detailed questionnaire asked participants for their evaluation of the current awareness methods. The latter questionnaire was administered in person by the authors. The interview process was chosen to insure a high response rate, and to allow us to have direct contact with the participants. The six librarians providing the search services monitored the time spent on developing the profiles and performing the retrospective searches and the updates, and the number of citations found in each search. The librarians completed a short questionnaire on each search concerning the databases they used and their assessment of the searches. Costs were monitored throughout.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS

Participants for whom complete data have been collected include 20 from Chemistry and Chemical Engineering (Chem/Chem E), and 16 from the School of Urban and Public Affairs and the Graduate School of Industrial Administration (SUPA/GSIA). Those who dropped out after the study began did so because they left the university, were not available for interviewing or just lost interest.

At the start of the project all participants were questioned about their previous experience with bibliographic searching, the frequency of their use of the library, and their methods for keeping up-to-date with the research in their field. 75% of the Chem/Chem E group and about 40% of the SUPA/GSIA group had previously received a retrospective computerized bibliographic search either at Carnegie-Mellon University or elsewhere. But only 25% of the Chem/Chem E's and 10% of the others had had experience of computerized current awareness services. The frequency with which the faculty members reported that they visited the library also differed. Over 80% of the Chem/Chem E's scanned the journals at least once a month (with 30% doing so once a week), whereas only 60% of the SUPA/GSIA group browsed more than once a month.

The entire SUPA/GSIA group relied heavily on personal communication with other researchers in similar fields, but only 80% of the Chem/Chem E group reported doing so. Similar proportions in both groups reported reading "Current Contents", (28%), using indexes and abstracts (61%), attending conferences (86%), and maintaining personal subscriptions to journals (78%). Other updating mechanisms reported included circulation of "Current Contents"

within a small interdisciplinary research group, formal exchange of working papers, the use of commercial alerting services, the work of a research assistant and using references cited in papers of interest. (See Table 1).

It has been suggested that senior and junior faculty members have different current awareness needs and methods. For this reason the sample was stratified into senior (associate professor and above) and junior faculty members. The response rate was the same for both classifications. Although slight differences were observed in current awareness methods (e.g. a slightly higher proportion of senior faculty members relied more heavily on conferences and personal communications and had a slightly lower frequency of browsing in the library) these differences were not statistically significant. Although we could discern little difference between senior and junior faculty, we did observe differences between the two groups, Chem/Chem E and GSIA/SUPA. These differences and similarities are discussed below.

During and after the study there was an increased demand for computer searches from the departments of the participants and the participants themselves. Of the 35% of the participants who requested another search during the nine months immediately after the beginning of the project, a third had never requested a computer search before.

THE RETROSPECTIVE SEARCH

About 75% of both groups chose a topic in their ongoing research interest, while others chose a new topic or a topic of general interest to them. A surprisingly large proportion of the GSIA group, 60%, said that they used the search to confirm what they already knew, thus they did not expect to find many new sources. Only 15% of the Chem/Chem E's used the retrospective search in this way. In general the Chem/Chem E's put the search to greater direct use, four used it to prepare research proposals, four used it to prepare bibliographies for papers, and three others gave the bibliography resulting from the search to PhD students as background for a thesis. Nearly all the participants looked up and read some of the references they received. Four of the Chem/Chem E's and three of the SUPA/GSIA group found little or no use for the searches which were unsuccessful mainly because there were no appropriate databases.

The number of citations found by the retrospective searches varied widely, the smallest being 15 and the largest being 841. About 26% of the Chem/Chem E group received over 500 citations while only one person in the SUPA/GSIA group received that many. Approximately one-third of each group received less than 100 citations from their retrospective searches. (See Table 2).

The search strategies for the SUPA/GSIA group took longer to develop with an average of over four hours compared to an average of one and a half hours for the Chem/Chem E group. Two factors may account for these differences: 1) the need to use a number of databases for the first group, and 2) lack of experience on the part of some librarians. The implementation of the developed search strategies took an average of one hour for both groups.

In general more databases were used for the SUPA/GSIA searches with over half the searches involving the use of three or four databases. About one-third of the searches in both groups involved the preliminary investigation and subsequent rejection of one or more databases.

Costs of the retrospective searches for the two groups differed. The searches for the Chem/Chem E's generally cost less than those for the others. (See Tables 3A and 3B). The median cost for the Chem/Chem E's was $47, and for the SUPA/GSIA group the median was $68. About 18% of the searches for the latter group cost over $100 and these were by no means the most successful (cf. Evans (1980) - costs being incurred by having to use more than one database.) When informed of the cost of their search and asked whether they would pay for it had it not been free, 70% of the Chem/Chem E's would have paid out of their research grants as compared to only 50% of the SUPA/GSIA group. Out of 14 of the Chem/Chem E's who would have paid something out of their own pocket, nine would have paid more than the search actually cost (in some cases considerably more). None of the SUPA/GSIA group would have paid the whole cost although about 65% would have paid something towards it (about $30 on average.)

To gather information on the participants' assessment of the search, they were given a list of possible negative characteristics describing the search and a list of positive characteristics and asked to indicate those which applied to their search. Among the chemists the most striking positive reaction was that 45% reported that they were made aware of other researchers in the same field and nearly 80% found relevant references of which they had not previously

been aware. The only negative aspect reported by 50% of respondents was that the references were not available in the CMU libraries. All other negative aspects such as the search was too broad, too narrow, important references were missed were reported by under 20% of respondents. Among the GSIA/SUPA group there was a higher percentage of negative remarks and also a higher percentage of positive remarks. Almost 50% reported that they were made aware of other researchers in the same field, 95% found articles of which they had not previously been aware and just over 20% were provided with new research leads. Even those those intention was to confirm what they already knew found new references. However, 40% said that important references had not been picked up, and 40% said that there were too many irrelevant references.

Seven of the participants received searches from databases which included abstracts of the papers cited. Two of these participants mentioned that the abstracts were extremely useful in evaluating the citations and choosing which to read. Unfortunately there is not enough data to determine whether the presence or absence of abstracts made a substantial impact on the participants evaluation of the searches.

CURRENT AWARENESS SERVICES

The cost of supplying computer updates to the two groups over the six month period did not differ greatly. The average cost for the Chem/Chem E's being $30 over the entire six months and for the SUPA/GSIA group $37. (See Table 5). The former group received far more updates per person. The bases in this area are updated more frequently and the average cost of each update was only $6. Most participants in the SUPA/GSIA group received only two or three updates over the six months as the bases were updated less frequently; the average cost of these updates was about $20. Most of the updates did not use a large number of search terms. Out of the 25 cases for which we recorded data on computer updates, 15 involved 5 search terms or less. Six used six to ten search terms, and the remaining four had eleven, twelve, sixteen and twenty-eight search terms. The Chem and Chem Engineering group revealed a wider divergence of number of search terms (1 to 28) than the other group.

Only the direct costs of providing the service was calculated, no attempt was made to assess staff costs. Similarly costs for the tables of contents include the cost of reproduction only. Computed at 5¢ per page the average

direct cost per participant of supplying the tables of contents for six months was $1.50. Even if we were to include direct costs, the tables of contents current awareness service could be provided on an continuing basis at a minimal cost, since all copying and mailing could be done by work-study students. Set-up costs would also compare favorably with the cost of developing search profiles for computer updates. The costs would involve mailing questionnaires to faculty, receiving replies, flagging the periodical check-in file and generating mailing labels and lists.

The answers to the question on optimal frequency for computer updates revealed a noticeable difference between the two user groups. Among the Chem/Chem E's, 40% want them at least once a month, 30% want them every two to six months and 30% did not know. Among the SUPA/GSIA group only 10% wanted them once a month, 10% every three months, 40% every six months or less frequently and 30% did not know. We surmise that this is indicative of the number of references expected in an update. The Chem/Chem E's typically received ten citations a month or more and the others under five or sometimes none at all, although three of the SUPA/GSIA group received an average of over 20 a month. Also stated was the fact that many did not have the time they need to follow up on the literature immediately.

As was the case with the retrospective search, a questionnaire was administered to elicit the participants' evaluation of the current awareness services. The The participants were asked whether they would like to continue receiving the current awareness services if, (1) they continued to be provided free of charge; or (b) if they had to pay for them. The results indicate that the tables of contents would be very popular with about 70% of both the Chem/Chem E,and the SUPA/GSIA groups wanting them regardless of whether they had to pay. Among those receiving computer updates the responses were that over 90% of each group would wish to continue if they were free and about 70% of both groups would wish to continue if they had to pay.

At the outset of the project we hypothesized that the greater timeliness of the contents pages would make them more attractive to the participants. (Articles appear in tables of contents at least three months before they appear in the databases from which computer updates are generated.) However only 30% of the participants regarded this feature as important. With a few exceptions, the consensus was

that the timeliness was not important especially when taken with a possible two year delay between the writing of an article and its publication. The advantage of the contents pages seemed rather to be that the participant could easily scan a journal he did not normally browse and be aware of articles outside his normal field of interest. The participants whose research areas were interdisciplinary and who could not get a comprehensive computer search were especially enthusiastic about the contents pages. In at least two cases participants entered a subscription for a journal they hadn't previously received, because the contents pages revealed so many articles of interest.

Interestingly, several participants suggested that they would like contents pages of journals from other libraries, particularly those in the immediate vicinity, indicating that availability of journals in-house is perhaps not as vital, in some cases, as we had assumed.

In the final evaluation of the two types of services, the entire SUPA/GSIA group rated the tables of contents provision as more valuable to them or at least as valuable as the computer updates. Only one of the Chem/Chem E group rated the contents pages as more valuable and one rated them equally valuable.

It was hoped that each participant would complete a very short questionnaire on each citation he actually wanted to look up and read during the course of the study. However this proved to be an unrealistic demand and only about half of the participants did so consistently. The questionnaire was designed to determine where the citation was found, and how long it took to obtain it. Half the Chem/Chem E group did return the forms on citations received from the retrospective search, updates and tables of contents, while only a quarter of the GSIA/SUPA group returned such forms. A conservative assessment of the incomplete data indicates that the Chem/Chem E group had no difficulty obtaining the references, which were mostly available in the C-MU libraries; on the average they were rated moderately useful. The other group, however, did not obtain over a third of those references they wanted to see; those that they did find were perceived as useful.

Throughout the survey the librarians involved provided feedback as to the problems involved in the searches. In the interview at the conclusion of the study, the librarians stated that in only three cases out of the thirty-nine the databases available were entirely inappropriate for the participants' needs. For about one-third of the searches for the GSIA group the librarians felt that the search was

less than successful. This was true for less than one-sixth of the searches for the Chem/Chem E group. The major problem during the study was getting the sustained cooperation of the participants: in getting them to keep appointments in providing feedback on searches. It is hard to see how this problem could be overcome, given the many demands on the time of faculty members. All librarians involved felt that the study had improved the relationships between them and faculty, the faculty being made more aware of the capability of the library services and the librarians being made more aware of the needs and special interests of the faculty members.

The study raised some questions for future consideration. Is there a predictable fluctuation in literature searching needs? Is there a different pattern for teaching faculty from that of those engaged solely in research? It might be valuable to compare faculty with people in similar fields in business and industry. What level of information is required? When is a title or abstract sufficient? How can faculty access to the resources of neighboring libraries be facilitated?

CONCLUSIONS

A major problem for the SUPA/GSIA group as opposed to the other group was that in many cases the topics of their research were interdisciplinary and no single database contained references from all the relevant sources. The easy access to in-house journals did not appear to make citations to those journals more desirable than citations to journals available elsewhere, nor was timeliness a significant factor. There were some differences between the two groups in their library use and in the methods they used to keep up-to-date. The Chem/Chem E's reported more frequent library browsing. The SUPA/GSIA group depended very heavily on personal communication.

To meet their current awareness needs, however, it appeared that the tables of contents provided a more valuable service than the computer updates, especially for the SUPA/GSIA group. This would seem to indicate that there is still a place for such manually operated services, despite the current trend towards computer based updating mechanisms. It does appear that the availability of tables of contents of a carefully selected group of journals is a valuable service and a viable economic alternative to computer updates.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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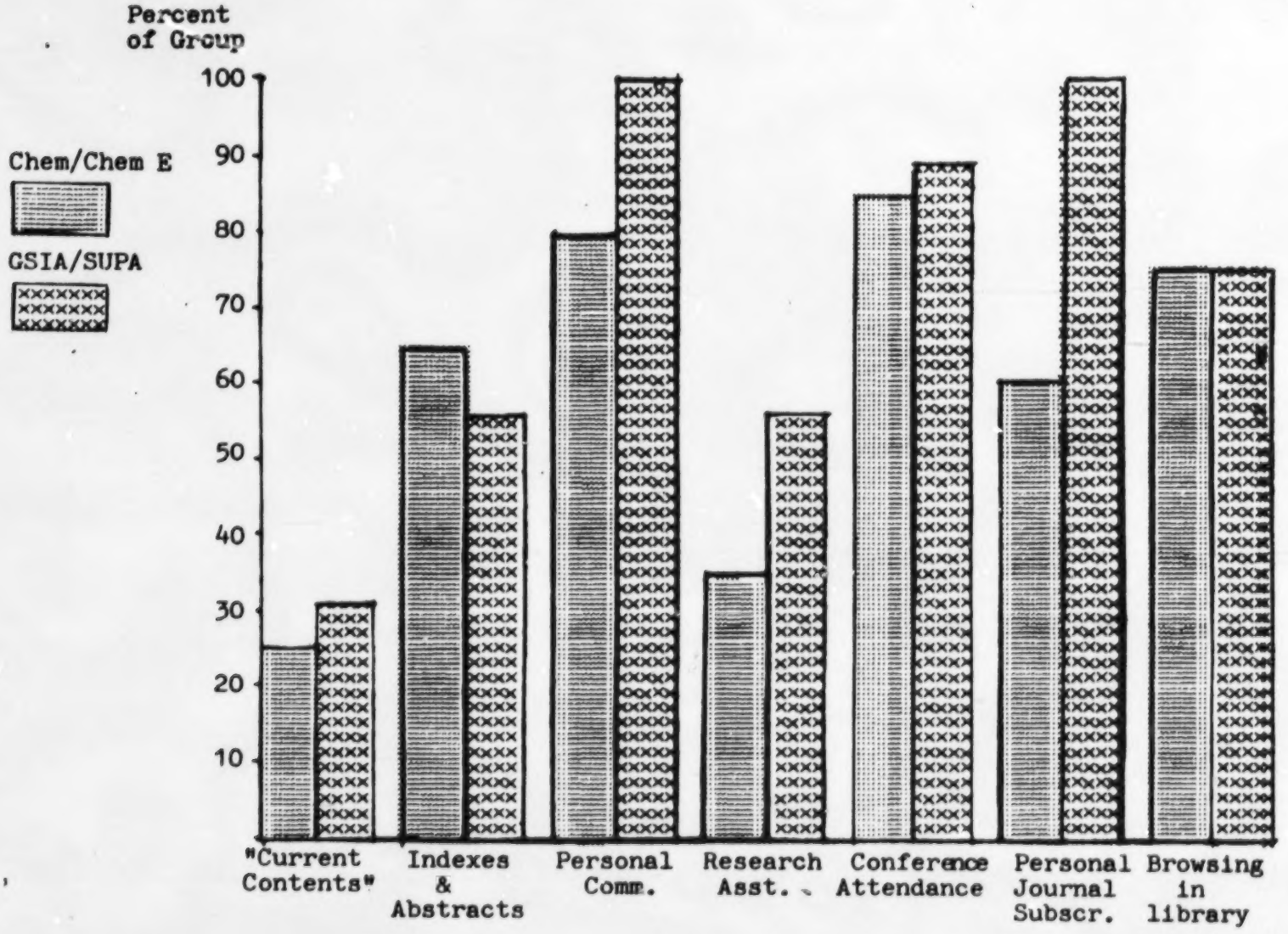
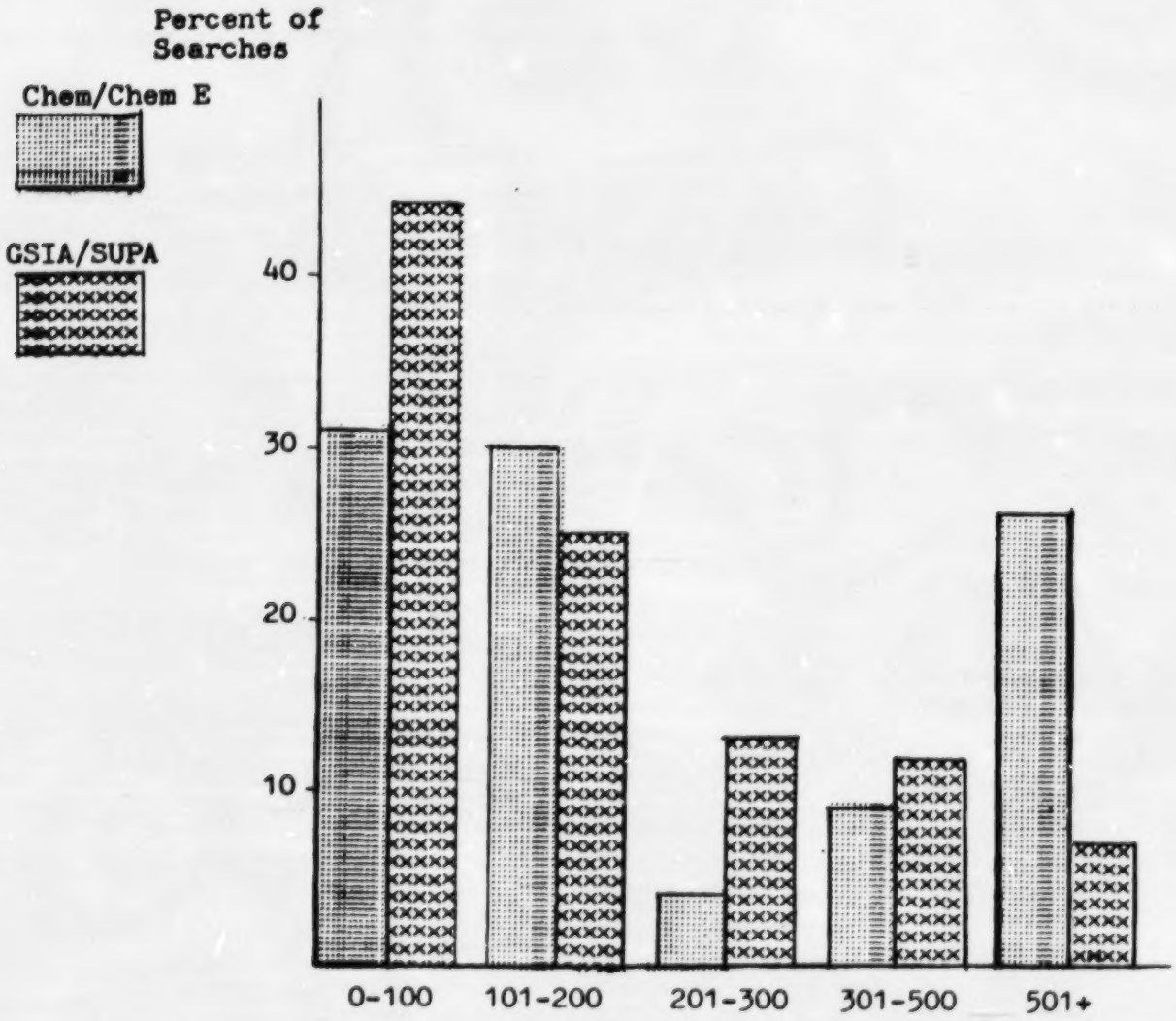
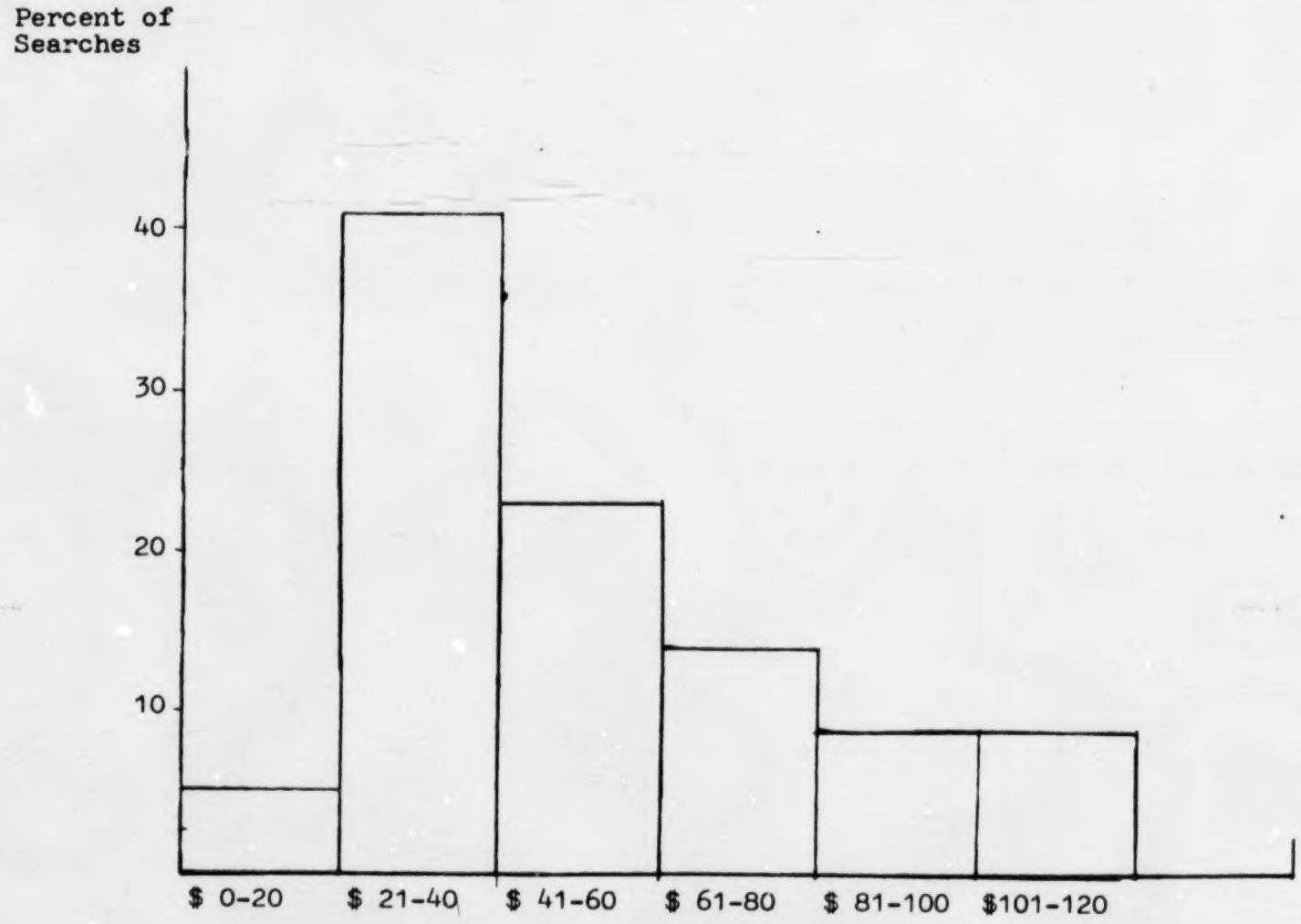
Table 1



CURRENT AWARENESS METHODS USED BY BOTH GROUPS

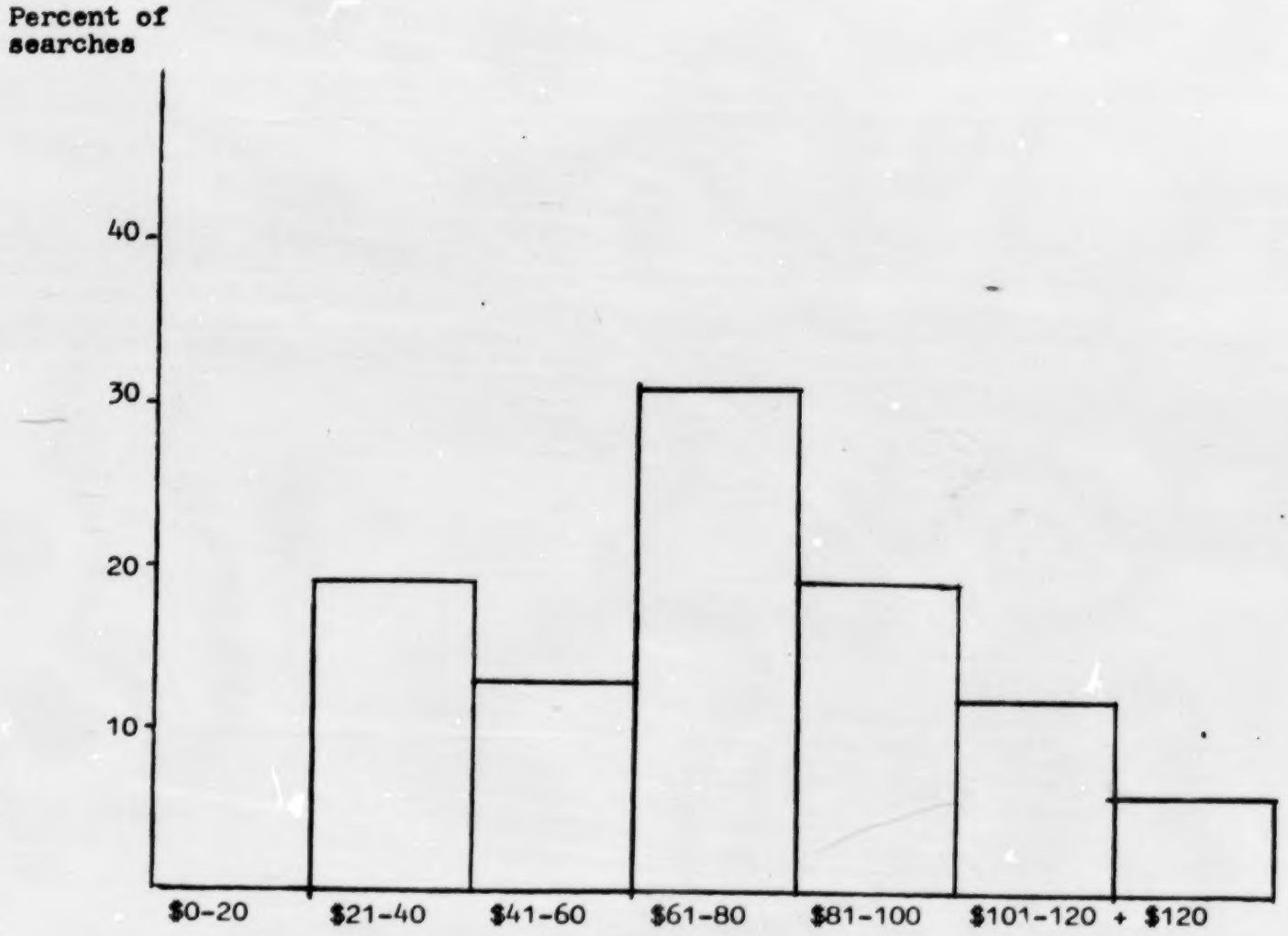


DISTRIBUTION OF NUMBER OF REFERENCES CITED IN THE RETROSPECTIVE SEARCH



DISTRIBUTION OF THE COSTS OF THE RETROSPECTIVE SEARCH FOR CHEM/CHEM E

Table 3B



DISTRIBUTION OF THE COSTS OF THE RETROSPECTIVE SEARCH FOR SUPA/GSIA

Cost of Updates	Chem/Chem E	SUPA/GSIA
$ 0 - 20	38%	36%
21 - 40	46%	18%
41 - 60	0%	27%
61 - 80	15%	9%
81 -100	0%	9%

TABLE 4 Distribution of the total cost of supplying the updates for the six month period for the two groups.

ADDENDUM

QUESTIONNAIRES USED DURING THE STUDY

Questionnaires 1A and 1B

(Used with participants and non-participants after the initial random sampling).

Purpose: to determine previous experience with computer-based searching and current awareness services, and to determine response bias.

Questionnaire 2

(Used with all participants at the beginning of the study).

Purpose: to develop search strategy for the retrospective search.

Questionnaire 3

(Used with participants selected to receive tables of contents).

Purpose: to determine which tables of contents the participants wished to receive.

Questionnaire 4

(Used with all participants after the retrospective search).

Purpose: to elicit participant evaluation of the retrospective search.

Questionnaire 5

(Used by participants on a continuing basis after citations were looked up).

Purpose: to obtain information on participants' attempts to obtain cited references.

Questionnaire 6:

(Administered to all participants at the close of the study by means of interview).

Purpose: to evaluate retrospective searches and the two types of current awareness services (computer updates and tables of contents) and to determine methods used by participants to keep up-to-date in their fields (for the groups receiving only one type of current awareness service questions which did not apply were omitted.)

Questionnaire 7:

(Completed by the librarians as the study progressed).

Purpose: to gain information on retrospective searches and updates, regarding number of databases used, search terms and cost.

ADDENDUM (Continued)

Questionnaire 8:

(Administered to the librarians after the end of the study).

Purpose: to evaluate the project and to gain information which would enable us to improve our search services and current awareness services.

Non-Participants

Name_____ Number_____ Initials of Recorder_____

1. For which of the following reasons are you not able to participate?

Not on campus (summer)	☐ 1
Too busy	☐ 2
Just not interested	☐ 3
Other (specify)	☐ 4

_____.

2. Have you ever received computerized bibliographic searches either at C-MU or elsewhere?

Yes	☐ 1
No	☐ 2

If yes, was it a current awareness service?

Yes	☐ 1
No	☐ 2

3. Have you used any of the following types of current awareness services either at C-MU or elsewhere:

Manual SDI (selective dissemination of information).	Yes	☐ 1
	No	☐ 2
Use of the journal "Current Contents" published by ISI.	Yes	☐ 1
	No	☐ 2
Tables of contents distribution.	Yes	☐ 1
	No	☐ 2
Other current awareness services.	Yes	☐ 1
	No	☐ 2
None.	Yes	☐ 1

4. How regularly do you visit C-MU libraries to scan journals? (i.e. to browse and keep up with current information.)

More than once a week.	☐ 1
Less than weekly but more than once a month.	☐ 2
Less than once a month.	☐ 3
Rarely.	☐ 4

Use this space to record other comments volunteered by non-participants.

PARTICIPANTS

Name_____ Number_____ Initials of Recorder_____

1. Have you ever received computerized bibliographic searches either at C-MU or elsewhere?
   Yes ☐ 1
   No ☐ 2

   If yes, was it a current awareness service?
   Yes ☐ 3
   No ☐ 4

2. Have you used any of the following types of current awareness services either at C-MU or elsewhere:

   Manual SDI (selective dissemination of information).
   Yes ☐ 1
   No ☐ 2

   Use of the journal "Current Contents" published by ISI.
   Yes ☐ 1
   No ☐ 2

   Tables of contents distribution.
   Yes ☐ 1
   No ☐ 2

   Other current awareness services.
   Yes ☐ 1
   No ☐ 2

   None. ☐ 1

3. How regularly do you visit C-MU libraries to scan journals? (i.e. to browse and keep up with current information.)

   More than once a week. ☐ 1

   Less than weekly but more than once a month. ☐ 2

   Less than once a month. ☐ 3

   Rarely. ☐ 4

Use this space to record other comments volunteered by participants.

CARNEGIE-MELLON UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES CURRENT AWARENESS STUDY

COMPUTER SEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

(5-year retrospective search)

PARTICIPANT'S NAME_____ DEPT._____ REF.NO._____

SUBJECT SPECIALITY_____Tel. No._____

ENTER A NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM TO BE SEARCHED. BE SPECIFIC: DEFINE PHRASES WITH SPECIAL MEANING.

_____

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List up to ten (or more) significant words, phrases, key words or word stems. Include alternate spellings.

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

IS YOUR TOPIC THEORETICAL OR APPLIED? IF APPLIED INDICATE APPLICATIONS OR END USES. _____

_____

_____

_____

HOW MANY ARTICLES DO YOU EXPECT TO FIND IN THE PAST 5 YEARS?

50 or more_____ 20-50_____ 10-20_____ less than 10_____

GIVE A TITLE TO YOUR SEARCH_____

LIST THE JOURNALS IN WHICH YOU NOW EXPECT TO FIND PERTINENT ARTICLES.

LIST TWO OR THREE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT AUTHORS (AND/OR ORGANIZATIONS) PUBLISHING ON YOUR TOPIC (COMPLETE NAMES, IF KNOWN, ARE HELPFUL).

IF AVAILABLE LIST THE COMPLETE CITATIONS TO TWO OR THREE OF THE MOST USEFUL ARTICLES ON YOUR SEARCH TOPIC. (IT MAY BE HELPFUL TO BRING THESE ARTICLES TO YOUR APPOINTMENT).

CARNEGIE-MELLON UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES CURRENT AWARENESS STUDY

TABLES OF CONTENTS

PARTICIPANT'S NAME_____ DEPT._____ REF.NO._____

SUBJECT SPECIALITY_____Tel. No._____

Please list six journal titles received by C-MU Libraries, Hunt, E&S and MI for which you wish to receive the table of contents. Do not list journals you receive personally, or those you regularly scan in the library or elsewhere

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

CURRENT AWARENESS PROJECT

To be completed by participant after the retrospective search has been received and reviewed.

1. Please check any aspects of the retrospective search which you find unsatisfactory:

   i. I received too many references and would like the search narrowed. ☐

   ii. I received too few references and would like to broaden the search. ☐

   iii. Too many of the references are irrelevant and do not describe the topic requested. ☐

   iv. Important references have not been picked up. ☐

   v. I received too many foreign language references. ☐

   vi. Many of the references were not available in the library. ☐

   vii. Other_____ ☐

2. Please check any aspects of the search you found helpful in your research.

   i. Prevented duplication of research conducted elsewhere. ☐

   ii. I was made aware of other researchers in the same field. ☐

   iii. I found relevant references I would not otherwise have known of. ☐

iv. I was provided with new research leads. ☐

v. Other_____. ☐

3. Approximately how many relevant citations per month do you expect to find in the updates/table of contents to be provided later. (Please complete box(es) which apply to you.)

Tables of contents ☐

Computer updates ☐

4. The cost of your retrospective search was $_____.
In retrospect would you have been willing to pay for it?

Yes, from my funds ☐

Yes, from my research grant ☐

Yes, from department funds ☐

No. ☐

5. What is the most you would have been willing to pay from your own funds had the search not been free? $_____

CARNEGIE-MELLON UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES CURRENT AWARENESS STUDY

Please complete this form for every article referenced, which you decided you would like to read, even if you were unable to obtain it.

Ref.no. ☐

Author

Article title

1. How did you make the decision to read this article?

Title sounded pertinent.	☐ 1
Author known to be in your field.	☐ 2
Institution of author known.	☐ 3
Other (specify).....	☐ 4

.....

2. Where was this article referenced? (You may check more than one)

Original computer search.	☐ 1
Computer-generated update.	☐ 2
Contents pages.	☐ 3

3. Were you able to obtain a copy of this article?

Yes	☐ 1
No	☐ 2

If 'yes' please answer the following questions:

4. How did you get hold of this article?

From the shelves of a C-MU Library.	☐ 1
In person from another Pittsburgh Library.	☐ 2
Via the photocopy/Interlibrary Loan Service of C-MU Libraries.	☐ 3
Other (specify).....	☐ 4

.....

5. How long did it take to obtain this article after you began looking for it?

Same day.	☐ 1
Within one week.	☐ 2
1-2 weeks.	☐ 3
More than 2 weeks but less than a month.	☐ 4
Over one month.	☐ 5

6. How useful was it?

Of no use ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 Very Useful

Name_____ Date_____ Dept._____

FOLD AND STAPLE: ADDRESS ON BACK

Final Questionnaire

1. To what use did you put the retrospective search (or to what future use do you intend to put it)?

2. Do you use any of the following methods to keep abreast of the literature in your field?

   1. "Current Contents" _____
   2. Indexes and abstracts _____
   3. Personal communication _____
   4. The work of a research assistant _____
   5. Conferences _____
   6. Personal subscription to journals _____
   7. Browsing in periodical collection _____
   8. Other (please specify) _____

3. Do you feel the need for library-provided services to keep up-to-date with the information in your field?

   Yes _____

   No _____

   If 'yes' what would you like to see the library provide for you?

   Computer Updates _____
   Tables of Contents _____
   Daily list of periodicals received _____
   Other (specify) _____

4. To what use did you put the tables of contents and computer updates that were provided for you?

   a. table of contents

   b. computer updates

5. Did you find any of the following unsatisfactory aspects of the computer updates that were provided for you?

   1. Many of the references were irrelevant _____
   2. Important _____
   3. Many of the references were not available in the C-MU libraries _____
   4. There is too great a time lag between articles being published and appearing in the updates _____
   5. Other, please specify _____

6. Has the number of references which you found relevant in (a) the tables of contents and (b) computer updates:

   been more than you expected _____
   less than you expected _____
   about what you expected _____

7. If you had the option would you wish to continue receiving these services:

   a) computer updates - if they were free Yes_____
   No _____
   if you had to pay Yes_____
   No _____
   b) table of contents - if they were free Yes_____
   No _____
   if you had to pay Yes_____
   No _____

8. Did the computer updates bring to your attention articles of which you would not otherwise have been aware? Yes_____
   No _____

   Did the contents pages bring to your attention articles of which you would not otherwise have been aware? Yes_____
   No_____

8. (Continued)

Was it important to you that the information contained in the contents pages was available to you as soon as it was published?

Yes_____

No_____

9. How often would you like to receive computer updates:

_____Once a month

_____Once every two months

_____Other (specify)

10. Please rate the usefulness to you of both these services as:

Computer updates		Tables of contents	
Valuable	_____	Valuable	_____
Useful	_____	Useful	_____
Adequate	_____	Adequate	_____
Useless	_____	Useless	_____

11. Did you tell other colleagues about these services?

Yes_____

No _____

12. Have you requested additional computer searches since the project began?

Yes_____

No _____

13. Do you have any comments on the survey or on the current awareness services?

CURRENT AWARENESS PROJECT

FORM TO BE COMPLETED BY LIBRARIAN ON EACH PARTICIPANT

(Complete first part in September, and update as necessary)

No. of participant ☐

RETROSPECTIVE SEARCH

1. Total time spent on retrospective search: (i) development ☐:☐
   (ii) on-line ☐:☐

2. Total cost of retrospective search: $_____

3. Total number of references in retrospective search: ☐

4. Names of databases finally used in search:

   (I)_____ (II)_____

   (III)_____

5. Any other bases used and rejected: (I)_____ (II)_____

UPDATES FOR PARTICIPANTS RECEIVING UPDATES

6. DATA BASE USED FOR UPDATE

7. Type of update: automatic _____ save search_____ re-enter_____

8. Number of terms used in updates: ☐

	# of references	Cost $
Computer update 1 September		
" " 2 October		
" " 3 November		
" " 4 December		
" " 5 January		
" " 6 February		

COMPLETE FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS

9. Do you feel that the search was successful?

   Not at all ☐☐☐☐☐ Very successful

10. Do you feel that the data base(s) were appropriate?

    Not at all ☐☐☐☐☐ Very successful

11. Suggestions and comments (e.g. request new data bases from vendor, was participant unhelpful) (Use space overleaf if required).

Librarian's initials_____

8-2-72

Librarian Questions

1. How many of the participants were present at their searches?

   1A. Did you find it helpful to have the participants present?

2. Identify problems you encountered during the searches.

3. Have you had more requests for searches from:
   a. participants
   b. people in same department as professor

4. Can you suggest anything which would have improved the project?

5. In retrospect would you want to structure the searches differently?
   Use different databases?

6. Do you have any opinions on what current awareness services would meet the needs of your participants?